

## Regional Housing Support Collaborative Minutes

January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 10:00am – 11:30am

Meeting via TEAMS

### Minutes

#### Attendees:

Wendy Hughes – Chair

Hedd Tomos - Gwynedd

Sam Parry – Vice Chair

Jono Clarke – Probation

Lynne Evans – Provider Rep

Lisa Pearson – Flintshire

Arwel Jones – Anglesey

Martin Cooil - Flintshire

Debbie Williams – Wrexham

Paul Firth – APB

Debbie Lambe – Conwy

Phil Forbes – BCUHB MH

Elliwllyr – Anglesey

Gwyn Roberts – Gwynedd

Elwen Roberts – VAWDASV

Steffan L Williams – Provider Rep

Emma Wood – Provider Rep

Tim Thomas – NRLA Private Sector Rep

Gwenan Ellis – Landlord Rep

Rachel Pierce-Jones - RDC

#### Apologies:

Received prior to the meeting from Linda Hughes (provider and landlord rep), Andy Jones (APB), Diane Jones (OPCC), Tracy Hague (Wrexham) Ann Lloyd (Denbighshire), and Claire Owens (Denbighshire).

#### 1. Welcome and Introduction and Declaration of interest:

Welcome new members, Tim Thomas from the NRLA as our RHSCG Private Sector Landlord Rep. New member for Gwynedd, Hedd Tomos replacing Dafydd Gibbard.

#### 2. Previous Minutes and outstanding actions:

November 6<sup>th</sup> minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

Rachel presented all the actions from the January meeting on the slides, all actions had been completed or on today's agenda.

#### 3. Housing Support Grant Spend

Rachel updated that just before Christmas HSG leads had quite the shock opening their indicative allocation letters, as the whole HSG budget for Wales had been increased by 40m. Rachel displayed the local authority increases on the slides at the meeting. However, at that time, local authorities were unsure if WG were going to be prescriptive in what the additional spend should

be spent on and whether this was a one-off additional amount for next year from another Covid Pot.

January 7<sup>th</sup> WG held a meeting for all HSG leads, and the main message from the meeting was yes the HSG budget has been increased by 40million, which was around over 9m for North Wales. The HSG budget had been taken from the core WG budget and must be seen as the new baseline going forward. WG were not too prescriptive in what it should be spent on, yes some areas were suggested; enhancing what we already have, continuing Phase 2 projects where they have shown to be a success.

Redistribution was raised at that meeting but the response was this would not be resolved by this Minister will be passed to next administration following the elections.

Rachel summarised that this is a positive move for the HSG budget, and now given the additional spend and at a time where local delivery plans are being written we need to use this time to look at any regional opportunities to be had.

Rachel displayed some of the regional opportunities discussed this week at the North Wales Cell Leads meeting and from conversations with other RHSCG member, the list covered:

- Continue funding Regional IDVA service
- Regional Pot looked after by Conwy as the host authority for the RHSCG (have used in past for research papers)
- LGBTQ+ Regional Project
- Male Domestic Abuse Refuge
- VAWDASV Dual Diagnosis Refuge (Substance Misuse and Mental Health provision)
- Mental Health First Aid Training
  - Mental Health Personality Disorder training
  - Regional approach / embedding to PIE / Trauma Informed approach
  - Regional Hoarding Project

A HSG leads meeting has been set up for the 4<sup>th</sup> February to discuss the above regional opportunities.

Debbie Lambe confirmed Llamau had been in touch with costings for the Denbighshire LGBTQ+ project and has details of another proposal for a regional project to look at Hoarding.

Paul Firth detailed the Area Planning Board through their alcohol strategy are looking at the impact of drinking in the home and the increase of this. Paul to circulate this to Rachel to send to members (**ACTION**). This will be free access to training.

Tim Thomas also stated he would share with Rachel to circulate to members details of the Fuel Poverty programme, does target small pockets of places but some are in North Wales worth noting and looking more into. Bed Grants available for insulation. Tim to share (**ACTION**).

Martin Cooil echoed Tim's comments that we need to be aware of all schemes, so we can keep people comfortable in their homes.

#### **4. Update on Annual Statement Progress**

An update on the progress against each priority area was detailed in the slides. Rachel updated on each priority area. Main update from this item includes:

- Our proposal to look at VAWDASV Dual Diagnosis refuge will be discussed at the HSG leads meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>. The VAWDASV Commissioning group have been unable to progress this forward due to lack of funding, however if this is being seen as a regional need it may be able to be progressed in 2021-22 funding.
- NW Collaborative Outreach Project – All staff are in place, and the pathway is now up and running. HSG Leads will need to confirm funding past April this year.
- Previous RCC project – Regional IDVA and Target Hardening – this will be continued to be regionally funded next year.
- Mental Health Links – Rachel confirmed that she has met with Phil Forbes this week, Personality Disorder training will be rolled out as a regional need.
- Website – this will be discussed at the next Sub Group on 12<sup>th</sup> Feb. Rachel to e-mail out to all RHSCG members prior to that meeting to gauge what everyone's thoughts are? Create a new HSG website or continue to use Conwy's intranet page to host minutes etc. **(ACTION)**.
- Regional Homelessness Strategy:
  - Apologies for the delay by way of update from this group. The contract for Laura Patterson to do pieces of work for this group is been drawn up with work set to commence in February 2021. Laura is contracted to:
    - Focus on learning from the response to the pandemic, Emerge from the COVID 19 Pandemic having learnt lessons and change the way we work.
    - Map the customer journey – use homeless data/information beyond the statistics to better understand the needs of all customers
    - Develop a work stream on Ending Evictions into homelessness with North Wales Social Housing Partners

#### **5. Redistribution**

Rachel presented the Redistribution Communication Paper, this is to be used for canvassing for the appeal against the percentage decreases for 5 of the 6 LA's in North Wales. It was agreed at the meeting the content of the paper does the required job, need to attach our service user documents to the paper **(ACTION)** but timing is key for this paper and it was agreed to wait until after the elections. **(ACTION)**

#### **6. Rapid Rehousing**

We agreed at the last meeting to keep this as a standard agenda item. Sam Parry chairs the Housing Leadership Cymru meetings and detailed in the slides why Rapid Rehousing and a quick re-cap of what Rapid Rehousing is. Sam detailed it is likely that by the end of the year there will

be an ask to produce Rapid Rehousing transition plans based off the Scotland model. Which will need to incorporate:

- Local Housing Market Assessment and homelessness context
- Temporary accommodation baseline position
- Understanding of support needs

Sam then detailed some of the main key themes to a successful delivery of Rapid Rehousing forming:

- Partnership working – common approach to tackling and ending homelessness – everyone working to the same aim of ending homelessness in Wales
- Access to appropriate accommodation
- Multi-agency commitment to providing support
- Culture shift, new ways of working
- Continued commitment to prevent homelessness – not just the statutory definition i.e. early intervention and targeted intervention
- Involvement of people with lived experience in developing plans and services.

We agreed to keep Rapid Rehousing as a standard agenda item (**ACTION**) There was a discussion after this how stock is the main issue. Tim gave details regarding the WG Pilot Private Sector Scheme. Conwy & Denbighshire is one of the original pilot areas along with Cardiff and Carmarthenshire. Sam shared that 3 properties have been signed up to the scheme in Conwy so far. It is a scheme where Private Landlords give their properties to the local authority for 5 years, guaranteed income for those 5 years, grant and loan are available to bring spec up if needed, and property will be returned in the condition handed over. Tim shared it is likely this may become a pan Wales scheme.

## **7. AST Charge Update**

Following on from the last meeting where there was panic attached to this agenda item there has been some positive movement where there is hope for an amendment to the act to be made. Wendy updated WG are exploring a retrospective solution to the issue. Which could remove the existing liability built up since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. Alongside allowing housing associations to continue levying service charges separate to rent on AST's.

Housing Associations (HA) and Support Providers have been asked to submit a further spreadsheet providing financial information attaining to HA and Support Provider service charges as well as the number of AST's issued during the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. We will continue to keep this as an agenda item to update on progress until this item has been resolved (**ACTION**).

## **8. Service User Papers**

The RHSCG has continued two service user papers from the former RCC, Our People's Stories and What They Said.

Our People's Stories is a paper updated annually, contains a case study from each LA detailing the persons journey and the importance of this paper is the cost benefit of the HSG. Each case study details how much the support cost against the costs that could have occurred if our preventative agenda was not in place.

What They Said is a paper analysing the responses to the Online Service User Feedback Questionnaire. This is a powerful paper from the words of people who have and are using our HSG funded services.

Both papers have been translated. It was agreed for Rachel to resend both documents with the message to share them more widely within your LA's and Providers. Both papers will be attached to the Redistribution Communication Paper when we are ready to promote that further **(ACTION)**.

#### **9. Any Other Business:**

- Next meeting – Zoom / Translation
  - BCUHB cannot use Zoom, Gwynedd to check if they can use Zoom. A lot coming forward on chat bar for translation. Rachel to discuss with Chair and Vice Chair after meeting as currently Teams isn't excluding any members where Zoom might. **(ACTION)**
- Membership of the RHSCG - Keeping to the agreed membership.
  - Rachel asked that the Membership is kept to for this meeting. Rachel has had too many new names appearing this week having calendar invite forwarded on to them.

**Date of next meeting:** March 26<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 10:00am – 12:00pm